



## Quarter 4 Project Report

**Reporting Period: 01 July – 30 September 2015**

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| <i>Project Title:</i>     | <b>Nepal Earthquake Emergency Response</b>                  |
| <i>Submitting Agency:</i> | <b>Catholic Relief Services (CRS)</b>                       |
| <i>Award Number:</i>      | <b>AID-OFDA-G-15-00130</b>                                  |
| <i>Starting Date:</i>     | <b>11 May 2015</b>  |
| <i>Completion Date:</i>   | <b>30 November 2015</b>                                     |
| <i>Duration:</i>          | <b>4.5 months with cost modification, no cost extension</b> |
| <i>Contact Person:</i>    | <b>CRS Nepal Country Representative</b>                     |

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

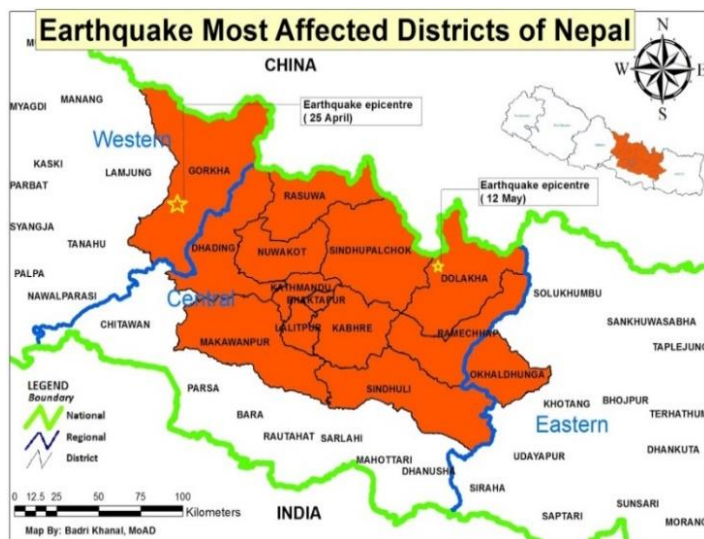
Just before noon on Saturday, 25 April 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Gorkha District, Nepal approximately 80 kilometers northwest of Kathmandu. It was the largest earthquake to strike the small, landlocked country in 80 years and spurred more than 300 aftershocks. On 12 May 2015, in close proximity to Mount Everest, a second 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal. Over eight million of Nepal's 28 million people across 14 Districts were affected with 2.6 million in urgent need of emergency shelter, water, food, medicines and reconstruction support. The Nepali government declared a state of emergency and immediately appealed to the international community for humanitarian assistance. By late September, the Government of Nepal (GoN) had reported 8,891 deaths, 605,254 houses destroyed, and 288,244 damaged.<sup>1</sup>

The scale of destruction and damage was extensive, affecting homes, buildings, health facilities, schools, communication lines, infrastructure, markets, and the water supply. Because of landslides and monsoon rains that began in June, many of the northern areas of Gorkha District were cut off from support that traditionally came by porter trails. This resulted in a limiting of relief items as responding organizations resorted to helicopter transport. The monsoon rains had the added effect of elevating the need for transitional shelter, increasing the risks of landslides, impairing access routes and delaying reconstruction. The Post Disaster Needs Assessment conducted by the Ministry of Finance estimated that costs for recovery and reconstruction were nearly US\$6.66 billion, or roughly one third of Nepal's Gross Domestic Product.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- By 30 September 2015, an estimated 4,654 households (HH)/23,270 individuals had been supported with Multipurpose Grant (MPGs) transfers<sup>2</sup> to meet basic needs while families reconstructed.
- By 30 September 2015 an estimated 150 vendors in four major markets of Balwa/Simjung Village Development Committee (VDC), Bachcheck/Hansapur VDC, Arughaut/Aruchanaute VDC, and Arkhet and Soti/Thumi VDC have been supported with two US\$150 cash grants to rehabilitate structures and restock damaged inventory.

## INTRODUCTION



CRS and its local partner, Caritas Nepal, began needs assessments in 4 of the 14 earthquake-affected Districts on 29 April 2015 to identify the most vulnerable communities and to prioritize emergency relief needs. Respondents overwhelmingly identified emergency shelter, safe water, food, medical care, hygiene materials, sanitation, psychosocial support, and basic household items as urgent priorities. CRS/Caritas Nepal also assessed market functionality and findings showed that many markets could still meet local demand if provided light rehabilitation support.

People were reluctant to return to their damaged homes and fears over the structural safety of homes intensified as aftershocks continued weeks on. Extensive

damage was reported in Gorkha District, with access completely cut off for most northern, high altitude communities close to the Tibetan border.

<sup>1</sup> [UN OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin Nepal Earthquake Issue 04, 1 – 30 September 2015](#)

These ground realities against a brief window of opportunity before the monsoon rains started meant CRS/Caritas Nepal approached the earthquake response through two phases – 1) rapid and scaled emergency response to move thousands of emergency shelter and WASH kits to the epicenter of the earthquake and 2) transitional shelter support, market recovery and cash transfers to highly vulnerable families and in close collaboration with local government.

This period's reporting focuses on transition phase activities and achievements.

## **PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION**

CRS continues to work with Caritas Nepal as its primary partner. Together, the organizations coordinate with other international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like Save the Children, Care, Plan International, World Vision International, primarily through the cluster system, but also through consortium initiatives like the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), the Humanitarian Partnership Agreement (HPA) and Dutch Relief Aid's Nepal Joint Response.

At the National level, CRS/Caritas Nepal work closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Shelter Cluster team, the Logistics Working Group and the recently established Recovery and Reconstruction Working Group. The CRS/Caritas Nepal team are also one of four international NGO members of the National Shelter Cluster Coordination Support Group.

At the District level, CRS/Caritas Nepal coordinate closely with the Chief Development Officer (CDO) and the District Disaster Relief Committee (DDRC) to share operational information and issues, discuss and plan activities and request approval for planned activities. In Gorkha, CRS/Caritas Nepal co-chair the Gorkha District Cash Coordination Working Group, lead the Early Market Recovery Working Group under the Early Recovery Cluster and since July have assumed the Shelter Cluster Lead role for Gorkha.

At the VDC level, CRS/Caritas Nepal work with the VDC secretaries to organize distributions and identify lists of beneficiaries. For specific activities like MPG distribution and winterization in the remote North CRS/Caritas Nepal are working with People in Need (PIN). For shelter reconstruction technical training and other relief item distributions CRS/Caritas Nepal are partnering with Center of Resilient Development (CoRD), Gorkha Technical Training Center (GTTC) and Initiative Outdoor.

Finally, CRS/Caritas Nepal have been coordinating closely with other Caritas Internationalis agencies supporting the response, including Caritas Australia, Caritas Germany, Caritas Austria, CAFOD, Cordaid, Trocaire, Caritas India, Caritas Bangladesh, and Caritas Internationalis Rome. This coordination is occurring at the headquarters level, as well as with Caritas teams that have been deployed to Nepal.

## **QUARTER 4 / FY 15 RESULTS**

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| <p><b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: TARGETED FAMILIES IN AFFECTED COMMUNITIES MEET THEIR IMMEDIATE HOUSEHOLD NEEDS.</b></p> |
|--|

*MPG program* On 11 August 2015, CRS/Caritas Nepal launched its MPG program to provide a one-time, US\$75 cash transfer so that highly vulnerable households could meet their daily living needs by restocking nonfood items (NFIs) and consumables. The cash grant value was established by the cash working group in Gorkha and finalized by the Gorkha DDRC. In the strategy, the District government required all implementing agencies to provide the same amount to each household meeting standardized vulnerability criteria. Though VDC Secretaries and Ward leaders provided CRS/Caritas Nepal with lists of eligible households, CRS/Caritas Nepal still triangulated information through spot-check, verification by other community key informants and home visits as part of post-distribution monitoring (PDM).

A unique feature of the program is CRS/Caritas Nepal's public private partnership with Prabhu Bank. Through other transition phase activities CRS/Caritas Nepal contracted Prabhu Bank to facilitate cash transfers, paying a 3.25% service fee for each transaction. This public private partnership resulted in several positive outcomes for CRS/Caritas Nepal's response including transferring liability and risk associated with transporting large sums of money to Prabhu Bank and cultivating a new relationship with a reputable, local institution.

In initial post distribution monitoring surveys, MPG recipients were asked how they directed their funds: 54% of respondents purchased housing-reconstruction specific inputs; 15% used the transfer for food and water and an additional 15% spent the transfer on health-related expenses.

Distributions continue and plans are in place to conduct a second round of distributions for absentee households and additional household lists provided by the VDC secretary.

In this reporting period and as part of CRS/Caritas Nepal's larger response an additional 8,736 blankets (17,080 blankets cumulative) were distributed as complementary items in sleeping kits.

| <b>NFI Type</b> | <b>Total # NFIs Distributed Q4</b> | <b>Cumulative Reached NFIs</b> | <b>Period</b> | <b>HHs / Individuals</b> |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| MPGs            | 4,654                              | 4,654                          |               | 4,654 HHs / 23,270 ind.  |

***STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: TARGETED FAMILIES IN AFFECTED COMMUNITIES LIVE IN IMPROVED CONDITIONS.***

The partners' strategy to procure items from multiple sources – local where possible and cost-effective, and international when necessary – to ensure timely delivery of shelter items was a best practice applied in other emergencies and that proved highly effective in the Nepal context. By the end of the emergency phase, 4,451 earthquake-affected families had received emergency shelter in Gorkha, Lamjung and Dhading District. PDM surveys conducted within one month of the distribution showed that:

- 77% of emergency shelters were inhabited within one-week of distribution of materials.
- 90% of households reported that shelter items were appropriate, safe and meet their needs.
- 87% of households reported that they used most of the items they received.
- 90% of households reported that the items they received were of high quality.
- 80% of households reported that the assistance they received was timely delivered.

***STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: EARTHQUAKE-AFFECTED FAMILIES LIVE IN A MORE HYGIENIC ENVIRONMENT.***

During the transition phase, when more in-depth assessment could be done on WASH related behaviors, it was noted that relatively reported WASH behaviors were high and other agencies had already distributed WASH/hygiene kits. Thus, CRS strived to target certain VDCs with less coverage or top-up on specific items. By 22 July 2015, 68 schools and 8 health posts in 7 Gorkha VDCs benefitted from WASH items procured through OFDA and other funding sources. Within the first 3-months of the emergency, 3,940 discrete HH/19,700 individuals had received either a 3-month or a 2-month WASH kit with OFDA and other donor funding.

Currently, the government approach to latrines is still under discussion. CRS is in close collaboration with relevant clusters and government bodies to explore how latrine support can be implemented to best meet the needs of the target population; however a final decision on how to approach latrine recovery is not expected to come before 30 November 2015.

***STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: AFFECTED LOCAL MARKETS ARE REVITALIZED AND SUPPLYING HOUSEHOLDS WITH BASIC GOODS.***

As part of its cost modification, CRS redirected funds from sanitation and hygiene and towards market rehabilitation based on evolving needs in and appropriate WASH coverage by other actors. CRS /Caritas Nepal worked directly with local vendors, through established management committees comprised of 6-10 elected members, to identify and consolidated vendor beneficiary lists. Once agreed on and finalized within the management committee the VDC Secretary authorized it and the Chamber of Commerce stamped the final list. Distribution packages were either US\$300 cash or US\$150 cash and corrugated galvanized iron (CG) sheets and were distributed by CRS/Caritas Nepal with the VDC Secretary present. To-date an

estimated 150 vendors have received market rehabilitation support to clear debris from their storefronts, restock shelves and set-up temporary stores.

***Cross-cutting Intermediate Result: Families in targeted communities have a voice in project design and implementation throughout the life of intervention***

Accountability and protection measures remain paramount to the current response. The program is using a variety of accountability and transparency mechanisms in order to encourage beneficiary participation and address complaints. On distribution day, team members were assigned to specific roles to encourage segregation of duties and community involvement. A selected volunteer roll-called names while a second verified their DDRC issued card that identified them as earthquake-affected. The ward leader authorized each coupon in order to testify that the beneficiary was indeed the right person. With the signed coupon, the beneficiary queued at the distribution point, and a volunteer provided each beneficiary a paper card with a hotline number for questions, concerns and issues. In exchange for the coupon, the beneficiary received the items and signed (pen or fingerprint) on a printed distribution list. Further, exit interviews were used to collect initial, real time feedback that helped to inform future distributions. After completing distribution at a VDC, two copies of distribution lists were given to the government – one for the DDRC and one for the VDC office.).

The hotline (phone call or SMS) continues to be widely used by the program's participants. MEAL staff handle the hotline responding if the answer is known, or providing a referral when the answer is unknown. All feedback and responses are logged into an excel database and categorized by feedback type and by sector. Of the 764 calls received to-date, 372 (49%) have been categorized as positive (e.g., community members expressing thanks and/or satisfaction with the distributions). The next largest categories of feedback were "reporting information" (26%), "requesting information" (15%) and "requesting additional support" (4%). Less than 5% filed complaints related to delay in service, quality issues, and/or selection process. With regards to sector, the majority of the 764 calls/SMS concerned cash assistance (60%), 25% were specific to WASH (25%), and less than 1/10 related to shelter (9%). In the case that the caller does not have their own phone for follow-up, the program passes the messages through the social mobilisers in that particular VDC.

To track all activities from immediate emergency response through the transition phase and now into the recovery phase the MEAL team developed a database that captures data points like discrete households reached, activity type, items distributed, distribution dates, VDCs/wards, and distribution partners. The primary source of the MEAL database is the GoN's beneficiary lists. Beneficiary lists were provided by the District government and entered into a database. Distribution information was then added to the database to track beneficiary numbers and amounts distributed, and to inform donor reporting and allocation of expenditures.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

*Challenges* MPG assistance was only available to those already registered on the government's social protection/ welfare program and those that are recently eligible for social protection as a result of the earthquake. Those that are not registered with the government, such as the most vulnerable and Dalits, are ineligible for MPG assistance.

Destruction of all housing in a few areas of Choprak VDC, Fujel VDC (and others that the MPG team visited) created tensions within the communities between MPG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The GoN-established MPG criteria of "earthquake affected" specified that households had to have lost or have a disabled family member to be eligible for MPG, but left out those with complete destruction of their household.

The fuel shortage during the past month has required that the team carefully plan PDM and as much as possible, coordinate with other vehicle needs. Even with this challenge, the MEAL team has interviewed 125 households to-date in 7 VDCs. The MEAL team aims to conduct more post-distribution monitoring by cell phone to help overcome this challenge.

Implementing during the monsoon season was a challenge for both the program team and beneficiaries. Many of social protection/ MPG recipients are elderly and disabled and would often walk long distances for

distribution. The monsoons created difficult conditions, including landslides, and the registration period had to be adjusted. For land transport from Gorkha, project teams required at least two 4x4 vehicles and a tractor, which helps the vehicles pass if mud is thick. For travel by helicopter to the North and remote Central regions, the skies must be clear at all landing areas. If it is cloudy in one location, the day's operations are cancelled. Successful transportation of personnel and materials is highly dependent on weather conditions.

Since the start of the emergency World Food Programme's United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (WFP/UNHAS) and Missions Aviation Fellowship (MAF) have provided primary air transport to remote communities, inaccessible by road or foot path. WFP/UNHAS' intended to close its operation by the end of August, but because of continued demand their mandate was extended on a partial cost recovery basis (US\$1/2.2. lbs for materials; US\$200/person for staff). MAF helicopter services have also continued. Both UNHAS and MAF report having enough fuel to continue flights through the end of October. Helicopters are currently being used to transport personnel and funds for the MPG cash distributions in the North and remote Central VDCs.

*Opportunities* Specific to protection, while distributions to-date have been well-coordinated, CRS/Caritas Nepal faced impediments on targeting. Organizationally, the organizations' mandate is to support highly vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, marginalized castes, and female and child-headed households. However, all NGOs were required to align with the GoN's own beneficiary lists. In order to do fulfill on this requirement and still preserve the partners' own targeting priorities, input from these vulnerable groups was sought during PDM. Through this post-distribution surveying process, the partners realized that isolated households were not featured on the GoN beneficiary lists. Partners also discovered that many households without government issued identification cards had assumed they were ineligible for relief items.

CRS/Caritas Nepal continue to work with the VDCs to agree on how these vulnerable households will benefit going forward. One proposal was to post distribution lists in the community prior to any future distributions so that community members are more involved and aware of targeting. Through its hotline, CRS/Caritas Nepal continue to monitor hotline feedback specific to these protection issues and is working to help address the issue of transparent beneficiary targeting in future programs.

Specific to logistics, a backup option for land transport to high altitude areas is being formulated. WFP has worked with trekking groups to establish a Remote Accessing Operations (RAO) that will allow for transport of relief materials to the North by mule and porter using the Lamjung corridor (Larkhe Pass – Manang District with altitude around 5200 meter above sea level), central corridor Barpark/Laprak, and the eastern side from Dhading. To use the transportation services provided by RAO, the relief goods must be packaged with a maximum weight of 66 lbs per pack; a mule can carry max 132 lbs load and a porter can carry 66 lbs.

## **ANNEX II PHOTOS**





*A CRS/Caritas Nepal volunteer shows a community member where they can with any concerns, problems or recommendations program.*



*A CRS volunteer orients beneficiaries prior to a multi-purpose cash distribution  
19 September 2015*



*A CRS/Caritas Nepal volunteer stands quietly viewing the aftermath of the April earthquake.*



# An ember of hope glows

More than three months after the earthquake devastated Nepal, full recovery is understandably still out of reach for the vendors of Baluwa Market in Simjung VDC. Baluwa Market was one of the markets selected for CRS/Caritas Nepal's Early Market Rehabilitation program in Gorkha District. In close coordination with the Baluwa Market Management Committee, the Gorkha Chamber of Commerce, and the District Disaster Relief Committee, 56 vendors were identified and were given assistance to restore their livelihoods. Each vendor received NPR15,000 (US\$150) to procure CGI sheets, tool kits and carpentry services.

On the surface it is apparent that the assistance has yet to see more moons before the slight rays of its impact manifests. The roads leading to Simjung and further are still in very poor conditions. Houses are still down on the ground. The sole veterinary healthcare center is still nonoperational. Irrigation lines are still distorted. Restoration of even just the temporary shops has yet to be completed.





But if you look closer and deeper into the lives of the individual vendors reached by the intervention, an ember of hope can be felt subtly glowing, slowly growing. Most of the vendors who have already started operating again claim that although they are not earning profit yet, they are neither at a loss. Some maybe be earning around NRP700 per day, some NRP1,500 per day, but majority shared that they are not earning a significant amount of profit yet. Despite this condition, Bhim said that her business is getting big, and although there is not much difference between before the earthquake and after she received assistance, she feels that the assistance is helping her do her business. Aash shared that his customers are very happy.

Netra shared that even if the amount he received is not enough but since CRS and Caritas Nepal are the only organizations which helped the community rebuild their livelihoods, it helped them a lot and because of that he is very happy about it. A similar sentiment is shared by Kat who said, “after the earthquake we just lost our hope, we were not able to restart our business. But the help of this project encouraged us to re-start our business.”

Dallu, a tailor, was able to buy a new sewing machine using the assistance he received and used the remaining to repair his two old sewing machines. Same with the other vendors, Dallu is only breaking even in his sales but he is looking forward to the festival in October. He said that normally more customers go to Simjung during festival season because it is the center place of business. Small grocery shop owners expressed the same and shared that they will use the profit they will earn and the remaining funds from the assistance in buying more goods which they will sell during the festival.

Just like Dallu, the other vendors shared their hopes for the festival; that by the time the festival comes, they will definitely earn big income.



